

Message Text

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22

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 AID-05 XMB-04 IGA-02 OPIC-06

PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 PA-02 USIA-15 PRS-01 EB-07 COME-00 TRSE-00

AGR-10 DOTE-00 /104 W

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R 061520Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7883

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LILONGWE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY MASERU

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

UNCLAS GABORONE 0624

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, EGEN, ETRN, BC, RH

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT S COMMENTS ON BOTSWANA -RHODESIA RAIL LINK

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

REF: GABORONE 0609 (NOTAL)

1. BOTSWANA DAILY NEWS APRIL 6 EDITION CARRIES REPORTAGE OF A
PRESS CONFERENCE HELD BY PRESIDENT SIR SERETSE KHAMA IN NAIROBI
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EN ROUTE TO A STATE VISIT TO INDIA, IN WHICH HE DISCUSSED THE
BOTSWANA LINK OF THE RHODESIAN RAILROAD. ACCORDING TO THE PAPER PRESI-
DENT KHAMA SAID THAT 80 PER CENT OF THE RHODESIAN RAILROAD
TRAFFIC WAS CARRIED OVER THE BEITBRIDGE ROUTE AND THAT THE BOTSWANA

LINK CARRIED ONLY 20 PER CENT. HE INDICATED THAT THE 20 PER CENT INCLUDED QUOTE EXPORTS FOR OTHER AFRICAN COUNTRIES END QUOTE. HE ALSO SAID THAT GIVEN THE CAPACITY OF THE BEITBRIDGE LINE, RHODESIA COULD QUOTE CHANNEL 100 PER CENT OF HER TRAFFIC THROUGH THAT ROUTE END QUOTE.

2. IN RESPONDING TO A QUESTION AS TO WHETHER BOTSWANA WOULD ALSO CLOSE ITS BORDER WITH RHODESIA FOLLOWING THE CLOSURE OF THE MOZAMBIQUE-RHODESIA BORDER AND THE RECENT MEETING OF FOUR AFRICAN PRESIDENTS IN LUSAKA, PRESIDENT KHAMA SAID THAT CLOSING THE BORDER WOULD CAUSE BOTSWANA TO QUOTE END UP HURTING OURSELVES MORE THAN HURTING RHODESIA END QUOTE.

THOMSEN

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